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UMASS/AMHERST



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YWCA

Greater Lawrence

RECEIVED

38 Lawrence Street  
Lawrence, MA 01840  
(508) 687-0331  
(508) 689-4089 Fax

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February 14, 1994

Piedad F. Robertson, Secretary of Education  
ATTN: Charter Schools  
Executive Office of Education  
One Ashburton Place, Room 1401  
Boston, MA 02108

Dear Ms. Robertson:

It is with great excitement and expectation that the Greater Lawrence YWCA submits Part I of its Charter School Application for your review and eligibility determination.

It is our belief that the Greater Lawrence YWCA, already a community leader in its efforts to address the problems of alarmingly high teenage parenthood, delinquency, and school drop-out rates among Lawrence adolescents, can create a center of innovation and educational leadership. Consistent with the YWCA mission, the Greater Lawrence YWCA Charter Middle School represents a pro-active effort to establish meaningful, innovative, cost effective education experiences for the youth of Massachusetts. The model herein described provides new opportunities for all at-risk adolescent students to attain high levels of achievement in an environment distinctly different from the traditional model of public education.

Please accept our application as a formal statement of our interest in obtaining Massachusetts Charter School eligibility, and our commitment to collaborate further with local resources to develop and implement this exciting model. If you have any questions, or if I can be of assistance, please do not hesitate to call me at (508) 687-0331.

Sincerely yours,

*Rebecca A. Hall*

Rebecca A. Hall  
Executive Director

941-09

# Commonwealth of Massachusetts

## Executive Office of Education

### *Charter School Application Designated Contact Person*

Please provide the Executive Office of Education with the following information identifying a designated contact person for the group submitting an application for charter school status. This form *must* be filed along with the charter school application no later than February 15, 1994. Please mail all required materials to:

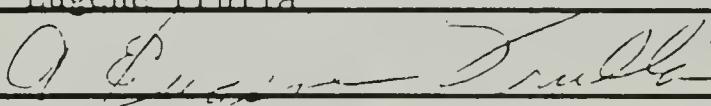
Secretary of Education  
ATTN: Charter Schools  
Executive Office of Education  
One Ashburton Place, Room 1401  
Boston, Massachusetts 02108

Tel: (617) 727-1313

*Please print or type:*

Greater Lawrence YWCA

Name of organization/group filing for charter school status

Contact Person Name:	Eugene Frulla
Signature:	
Title:	Director of Education Services
Address:	38 Lawrence Street
City:	Lawrence
State:	Massachusetts
Zip:	01840
Telephone:	(508) 687-0331
Fax:	(508) 689-4080

# Charter Application: Part I

**Part I:** This is an eligibility section to be completed by *all* applicants considering applying for a charter, regardless of proposed starting date. For those applying for a charter to commence in 1995, this section is not technically due until February 15 of next year, but can be submitted in this year's application cycle to receive early eligibility determination. This will formally commence the application process, giving applicants more "official" status as they seek to develop their charter school plans. For applicants applying for a 1994 charter, this section is the first section of a three-part application.

## 1.) Mission Statement:

Describe the core philosophy or underlying purpose of the proposed school.

## 2.) School Objectives:

- A. What are the school's broad academic objectives for student learning?
- B. Describe any non-academic goals for student performance.
- C. What type of community environment do you hope to foster at your school?

## 3.) Statement of Need:

- A. Why is there a need for this type of school?
- B. Explain why a charter school would help to effectively address this need.

## 4.) School Demographics:

- A. Describe the area where the school will be located. If a facility has already been secured, please state so.
- B. Why was this location selected? Are there other locations suitable to the needs and focus of the school?
- C. Describe any unique characteristics of the student population to be served.
- D. What is the school's anticipated enrollment?
- E. What grade levels will be served? How many students are expected to be in each grade or grouping?

## 5.) Recruiting & Marketing Plans:

- A. Demonstrate how you will publicize the school to attract a sufficient pool of applicants.
- B. Specifically, what type of outreach will be made to potential students and their families?

## 6.) Admissions Policy:

- A. Describe the admission methods and standards you will use to select students.
- B. Explain how these policies further the mission of the school in a non-discriminatory fashion.

## 7.) Profile of Founding Coalition:

- A. Describe the make-up of the group or partnership that is working together to apply for a charter.
- B. Discuss how the group came together, as well as any affiliation with existing schools, educational programs, businesses, non-profits, or any other entities or groups.
- C. Include any plans for further recruitment of founders or organizers of the school.

## 8.) Timetable:

- A. Discuss a timetable of events leading to the opening of a charter school.
- B. If preparing for a 1994 charter, demonstrate the feasibility of opening school doors this fall, in the event of a legislative change in the starting date.

**CHARTER APPLICATION  
PART I:**

**CONCEPT PAPER  
for  
Eligibility Determination**

**Greater Lawrence YWCA Charter Middle School:**

An Alternative Middle-School Education Model for At-Risk Adolescents

Submitted by:  
Greater Lawrence YWCA  
38 Lawrence Street  
Lawrence, MA 01840

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## **1. Mission Statement**

The Greater Lawrence YWCA, a charter member of the National YWCA of the USA, is a not-for-profit (501c3) multi-service organization committed its stated mission:

*The Young Women's Christian Association of the United States is a women's movement nourished by its roots in the Christian faith and sustained by the richness of many beliefs and values. Strengthened by diversity, the Association draws together members who strive to create opportunities for women's growth, leadership and power in order to attain a common vision: Peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all people.*

*The Association will thrust its collective power toward the elimination of racism where it exists and by any means necessary.*

Committed to the empowerment of women and girls and the elimination of racism through the initiation of social change, the Greater Lawrence YWCA has been serving the Lawrence community for over 100 years: meeting the needs of women and their families, fostering leadership and self reliance, providing support services, and advocating for a more responsive society. The core program themes of the YWCA are: youth development, health promotion, family life, empowerment, and community and leadership.

The Greater Lawrence YWCA recognizes that the children of today are the leaders of tomorrow. Since 1985, the YWCA has housed co-educational daycare, pre-school, kindergarten, and after-school daycare programs. Desiring a more proactive role in the early intervention of girls at risk of dropping out of school, the Greater Lawrence YWCA became an affiliate of Girls Incorporated, the nation's leading expert on girls, in 1991. Focused on research and the development of informal educational programs for girls, Girls, Inc. shares our philosophy of empowerment in their stated mission:

*"to assist affiliates in effectively meeting the needs of girls in their communities; to help girls and young women overcome the effects of discrimination and to develop their capacity to be self-sufficient, responsible members of the community; and to serve as a vigorous advocate for girls, focusing attention on their special needs."*

In Lawrence, the effects of racial discrimination on both girls and boys has led the Greater Lawrence YWCA to expand its target population to include all youth at risk. From an educational perspective, the young boys of Lawrence are no better prepared than the young girls to succeed in traditional academic settings. Both groups share similar rates of poor attendance, delinquency, teen parenthood, poor test scores, and risk of dropping out of school.

The missions of these two national organizations sets the context for the core philosophy and underlying purpose of the proposed charter school:

*The Greater Lawrence YWCA Charter Middle School for At-Risk Adolescents is committed to the intellectual, moral, physical, and social development of every student by providing:*

- *A quality non-traditional, performance-based education designed to meet the individual needs of each student;*
- *A caring school community that fosters family unity, empowerment and the inclusion of parents as equal partners; and*
- *A supportive environment for teachers and parents to work together in implementing innovative programs based on the assumption that each student possesses strengths, abilities and the potential for success.*

## **2. School Objectives**

### **A.**

In May 1990, the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (*SCANS*), under the direction of the U.S. Department of Labor, began an effort to engage businesses, schools, unions, and parents in a dialogue about the future they hold in common- the education of America's children as the workers of tomorrow. The first portion of their research, examining the changes in the world of work and the implications of those changes for learning, was completed in May 1991, and the Commission issued a report entitled *What Work Requires of Schools*. This document deals with two issues- defining the skills needed, and proposing acceptable levels of proficiency for each defined skill. The result of this year-long, intensive research effort is used here as the foundation for the development of an alternative model to address the education of early adolescent at-risk middle-school students.

*SCANS* research verifies that workplace know-how defines effective job performance. This know-how has two elements, shared by virtually every employer: a foundation, and a group competencies and a foundation. The following three-part foundation of skills and personal qualities, in conjunction with the five areas of competency, lie at the heart of job performance today (p.xvii):

### **A Three-Part Foundation**

**Basic Skills:** Listening, speaking, reading, writing, and mathematics

**Thinking Skills:** Creative thinking, decision making, problem solving, visualization, knowing how to learn, and reasoning

**Personal Qualities:** Responsibility, self-esteem, sociability, self-management, integrity, and honesty

### **Five Competencies**

**Resources:** Identifies, organizes, plans, and allocates resources

**Interpersonal:** Appreciates diversity and works with others as team member, teacher, facilitator, leader, negotiator

**Information:** Possesses research skills to acquire, evaluate, interpret, and communicate information

**Systems:** Understands complex inter-relationships, monitors and corrects performance, and improves or designs systems

**Technology:** Works with a variety of technologies, selects and applies technology to tasks

These eight major areas represent essential preparation for all students. In the proposed YWCA Charter School, all eight will be an integral part of every young person's school life. In this way, the proposed model is facilitative: it is built around the holistic personal development of the child at this critical stage of adolescence, with the goal of reintegration to other educational environments (public, vocational, charter) for education completion.

**B.**

The goal of the school is to build the adolescent's capacity for responsible and confident adulthood, economic independence, and personal fulfillment. Educational components address specific areas of life management which young adults need to master and that enable them to:

- Pursue careers that will provide them with economic autonomy;
- Exercise personal and collective power effectively and responsibly; and to analyze and contribute to positive change in their community, state, nation, and world;
- Conquer life's basic challenges in both traditional and nontraditional roles; and to prepare students to function independently and interdependently today and in the future;
- Take charge of maintaining fit, healthy bodies and to function comfortably as responsible sexual beings;
- Appreciate their own and others' heritage; to enjoy diverse forms of creative expression, and to recognize the contributions of women and minorities to history and culture.

Thus, the education model proposed is also preventative. It seeks to keep at-risk middle school aged children (11-14), who may already be disenfranchised by traditional models of education, involved in positive learning experiences. It seeks to prevent teen pregnancy, family violence, malnutrition, and self-destructive attitudes and behaviors that prevent adolescents from completing their education, and attaining self-actualization. A variety of techniques will be employed to facilitate personal empowerment and encourage the development of leadership and decision-making skills.

**C.**

The proposed model seeks to involve a cadre of support systems including the family, parental employers, and community resources such as the Department of Social Services and Welfare, to intervene on behalf of the child and address environmental factors that may negatively impact the child's educational experience. Parental involvement is critical. A parent representative will occupy a seat on the Board of Trustees, and a Parent/Teacher Advisory Group will play a key role in management decision making. Parents will be presented with a variety of opportunities for their involvement and will be required to meet with their child's teacher on a monthly basis. Special workshop modules will be developed to facilitate the parent's evolution as an advocate and asset.

### **3. Statement of Need**

**A.**

While a student cannot officially withdraw from the public school system until the age of 16, it is commonly known that such withdrawal, psychological and/or physical, may take place at a much earlier age. The evidence surrounds us. Statistics compiled by Lawrence Public Schools for 1988-1990 indicate a worsening problem:

**Grade 9 Basic Skills Testing Results**  
Percent Passing Over a 3 year period

	<b>1988</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>1990</b>
Reading	56%	64%	41%
Math	51%	57%	39%
Writing	67%	77%	42%

**California Achievement Test Result**  
**Grade Mean Equivalent (GME) for Total Battery**

Grade	GME
7	6.0
8	6.5
9	6.8

**Students Who Dropped Out by Grade Level, 1989-90**

Grade	9	10	11	12	Total
Total Drop Outs	109	90	82	25	306
% Minority	81%	84%	68%	72%	

**NOTE:** More than one third of all drop outs each year occur in the ninth grade.

The four year dropout rate for any given class has been consistently 45-46%.

In poor urban settings such as Lawrence, large numbers of children face barriers and disruptions to learning that may include:

- personal factors- substandard housing, poor nutrition, and inadequate communication skills;
- family factors- undereducated, unemployed/underemployed, single or welfare dependent, abusive, and/or substance dependent parents;
- societal factors- high levels of violence, pregnancy and drug use among peers; and
- cultural factors- transience, value systems and attitudes toward education and work.

Most "at risk" children face a combination of these factors at any given time in their young lives, and most often lack the role models that would facilitate their ability to be assimilated into the traditional American society we hold up as a goal for our young people.

**B.**

If we, as educators and human service professionals, have not kept children engaged in positive learning experiences through their middle school years, education reform and school to work transition programming at the high school level are meaningless. The students who need such initiatives the most may already have "failed" and withdrawn.

Adolescents tend to be focused on other than intellectual pursuits. The development of social skills takes precedence as they begin psychological and physical separation from family and seek a sense of acceptance among their peers. In this phase of their lives, learning must have some functional value to the individual to be deemed worth the time and effort. The demand for instant gratification that characterizes poverty also contributes negatively to the adolescent's commitment to his or her present academic endeavors.

The adolescent aptitude for recognizing patterns and relationships is often demonstrated in social contexts. This indicates a unique opportunity for educators to present academic material in a highly-connected, interdisciplinary, functional fashion. In situations when the child's life environment has impeded his/her prior mastery of basic skills, the learning experience must be built around the strengths of the student. Distinctively different teaching methods will provide these children with an opportunity to experience successful academic achievement, strengthen basic skills, and build their confidence for continued achievement in high school.

Enrollment in the YWCA Charter School is a unique and positive opportunity. An array of high-interest, hands-on learning activities relevant to their lives and appropriate to their age

group promises to engage adolescents in a participatory educational adventure that will change their lives. An environment that supports and encourages innovative teaching methods and the active involvement of parents, provides a true team approach to the educational development of each child. An extended day, twelve month program provides a continuity of contact and positive interventions throughout the child's enrollment.

#### **4. School Demographics**

##### **A.**

The Greater Lawrence YWCA is located in the heart of downtown Lawrence, across the street from Campagnone Common, and less than a block from Lawrence High School (9-12), the Oliver School (5-8), the Greater Lawrence Department of Training and Development, and the Lawrence Public Library. The Greater Lawrence YMCA is adjacent to the parking lot.

A building floor plan is attached, detailing classroom space available.

##### **B.**

The Greater Lawrence YWCA is already recognized as a center of learning, recreation, support services, and extended day programming. On-site resources include: Girls' Club, a computerized Study Center, After School Daycare programs, the Domestic Violence Program at the Women's Center, a full sized pool, a gym, a theater, and two complete kitchens.

##### **C.**

As the statistics in Section 3 detail, the Lawrence middle school student population is predominantly Hispanic, working below grade level, and at-risk of dropping out of school. Nearly 50% of the students live below the poverty level. The Charter School would target those students for whom traditional teaching methods have failed, who require an individually paced program of basic skills instruction, and whose parents are willing to take a participatory role in an innovative model of enhanced educational activities.

##### **D.**

Initially, the Greater Lawrence YWCA Charter School will recruit thirty (30) students. Feedback from local educators and individuals within the community leads us to anticipate that the school will be oversubscribed. It is crucial, however, that the initial numbers be manageable to enable the project to be responsive and dynamic. The majority of time, effort and resources must be focused upon the needs of the student population. Administrative staffing requirements will be kept to a minimum during this phase, and then determined in response to student needs and available resources. Second year enrollments will be based upon these factors, and the success of the first year.

##### **E.**

Enrolled students would otherwise be enrolling in the fifth through eighth grades. Assuming that the majority of students will be entering the program with below grade level skills, it is more appropriate that a team approach be used wherein no student is accorded a grade level, but rather, each works according to an individualized education plan (IEP) that identifies competency mastery required for high school entry. Essential to program implementation is a clear understanding by students of the program, its objectives, and its relevance to their lives. This will also be reinforced throughout the curriculum. The IEP will be developed between guidance, parent and child, using a variety of indicators including but not limited to personal interests and aptitudes, standardized test results, and letters of recommendation.

The proposed model utilizes a number of direct service support staff (e.g., aides, counselors) that will keep the classroom ratio of students to adults at approximately 8:1. A balance will be sought among age groups, recognizing, of course, that ability levels in any given age group will cross traditional grade levels.

## **5. Recruiting and Marketing Plan**

### **A.**

The Greater Lawrence YWCA Charter Middle School will develop and publish a school brochure. This material, with a cover letter, will be sent to all local elementary and middle school administrators, guidance counselors, parent/teacher organizations, and parent councils, requesting their cooperation in making appropriate referrals, disseminating information, and providing the YWCA with an opportunity to make presentations. In addition, similar requests will be made of youth groups, the local Regional Employment Board, local churches, and social service agencies. School information and flyers will be distributed to all of the above.

### **B.**

The interest of parents and prospective students will be solicited via bilingual advertisements in all local newspapers, radio stations, local cable access, and handouts. The YWCA will plan several open house presentations and tours. Personal invitations will be extended to students referred by outside organizations and other sources. The YWCA will also seek access to parents through the Lawrence Public School Parent Information Center.

## **6. Admissions Policy**

### **A.**

A formal admissions policy will be approved by the Board of Trustees. Students will be required to meet "at-risk" criteria, including any combination of the following:

- May have been retained a year or more during school career;
- May have poor attendance, defined as being absent from school 20% or more of the time without excuse during the most recent grading period;
- May have failed to receive credit in at least two major subjects during the last marking period;
- May lack proficiency in the English language as measured by a standardized test.

Students will be selected on the basis of abilities necessary to meet the stated goals of the charter school program and assure the ultimate success of the student, using a combination of:

- documentation of at-risk status;
- written recommendation of the building administrator (or his/her designee) of the school in which the student was enrolled during the prior year re the appropriateness of the Greater Lawrence YWCA Charter Middle School model of teaching methodologies to the individual learning style of the student. Also considered will be the student's behavioral adaptability to an open classroom structure and ability to participate within a team environment;
- review of student portfolio, permanent record, attendance records, indications of parental involvement;
- results of a personal interview with the student and his/her parent(s), wherein all parties will be instructed as to their respective roles and responsibilities of participation; and

- evaluation of a case study profile including academic, physical, social and attitudinal characteristics of the student to determine the potential for the student to benefit from and succeed within the charter school environment.

**B.**

In keeping with the mission of the YWCA and its Charter School, the standards used as part of the admissions process shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed, sex, ethnicity, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, age, ancestry, athletic performance, special need, proficiency in the English language, or academic achievement.

## 7. Profile of Founding Coalition

**A.**

The Greater Lawrence YWCA has not yet formalized its group of founders. The following individuals have collaborated to design a conceptual model presentable for broader public support and subsequent formalization:

Greater Lawrence YWCA Board of Directors

Rebecca Hall, Executive Director of the Greater Lawrence YWCA

A. Eugene Frulla, former public school administrator, Director of the YWCA Study Center

John A. Coyle, former middle school administrator

Dulce Hausslir, social worker and family advocate for the YWCA

Laura RuizdeLuzuriaga, education and development consultant

Janice Burkholder, Regional Employment Board member, former president

In addition, the model herein described incorporates the observations, ideas, and recommendations of countless other individuals with experience, expertise and/or an interest in the education, health and well-being, and future of at-risk adolescents.

**B.**

Long before the 1993 legislation was passed to establish charter schools, the aforementioned parties were discussing and developing the concept proposed herein. Acutely aware of the shortcomings of the traditional education system with respect to at-risk clientele, we were engaged with the organizations and individuals named below in an effort to conceptualize a model that would better meet the needs of parents, students and teachers. Our respective experience and expertise, combined with proactive research efforts, provided the seeds of what has become an alternative middle school education model for at-risk adolescents.

Each of the parties named above is presently involved in education and/or at-risk youth programming, as well as with numerous boards of directors, relevant committees, and professional organizations. It is this combination of expertise and access to resources that has enabled the group to frame its efforts around a charter school opportunity. While some areas of the required application package are admittedly underdeveloped, the group had no intention of applying for a 1994 charter. When the opportunity for early eligibility determination was made possible by the State, the group determined it would be prudent to introduce its intentions to the Office of Education. It is the belief of the group that eligibility determination will aid in the development of the model, its requisite structures, and more formal collaborative agreements.

**C.**

The YWCA Charter School is currently involved in informal discussions seeking collaborative and/or cooperative support from the following sectors and organizations:

Higher Education-	Harvard University Gordon College Merrimack College Northern Essex Community College
Local Public Schools-	Lawrence Public Schools Andover Public Schools Methuen Public Schools Haverhill Public Schools
Local Private Schools-	Brooks School Phillips Andover Academy St. Mary's High School Central Catholic High School Presentation of Mary High School Holy Rosary School
Business-	AT&T Raytheon Malden Mills Minority Business Council Greater Lawrence Chamber of Commerce Northmark Bank Andover Bank Lawrence Savings Bank
Health-	Lawrence General Hospital Holy Rosary Hospital Greater Lawrence Psychological Center
Human Service-	Department of Public Welfare Department of Social Services Department of Employment and Training Greater Lawrence YMCA
Labor-	Construction Union Local IBEW Local 1365
Religious-	Grace Episcopal Church St. Mary's Church Iglesia de Cristo Hispanic Apostolate Greater Lawrence Council of Churches
Municipal-	Lawrence Police Department Lawrence Youth Commission Lawrence Department of Training and Development Greater Lawrence Regional Employment Board Lawrence Public Library Lawrence Housing Authority
Judicial/Legislative	

Individuals and representatives of organizations with an interest in the education and future of area youth will be invited to a presentation of the concept Greater Lawrence YWCA Charter Middle School for At-Risk Adolescents. At that time, specific information, support, resources, and levels of involvement will be discussed and solicited. Personal communication with key partners will take place both before and after this presentation, to encourage participation as founders or organizers of the school.

## **8. Timetable**

### **A.**

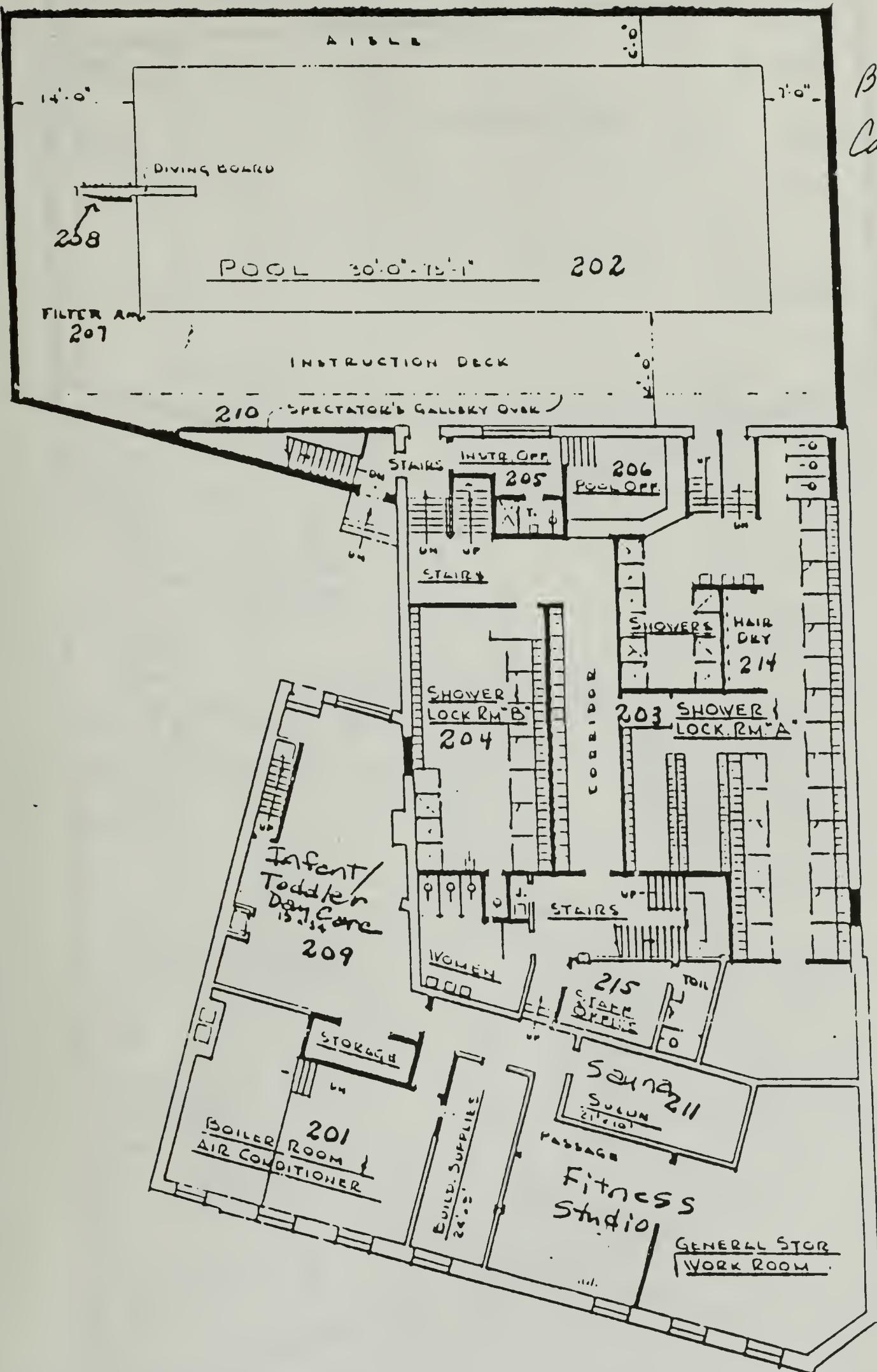
Between now and a September 1995 opening, there is much to be done, including but not limited to completion and/or formalization of the following:

- Presentation for collaboration and cooperation of other critical players (as outlined in Section 7)
- Determine Board of Trustee selection
- Define Board of Trustee role and responsibilities
- Form an Advisory Council of education, human service and business representatives as a resource to the Board of Trustees
- Complete by-laws and other administrative agreements
- Develop a formal management structure and plan that will enable the school to achieve the goals and mission set forth in its charter
- Establish a process to provide all information required by law and regulation
- Establish a basic skills curriculum sequence for entire student population
- Prepare a budget
- Develop plan for recruitment of qualified teaching and managerial staff
- Recruit interested teachers and parents to design instructional modules
- Prepare and furnish classroom space
- Acquire appropriate materials and technology
- Establish teaching strategies, methodologies, plan for continued teacher training and information sharing
- Set expectations, specific educational/non-educational student objectives
- Define performance standards, testing and portfolio requirements set by the Board of Education for students in other public schools
- Establish baseline and anticipated benchmarks of success re local rates of test failure, pregnancy, attendance, drop outs, delinquency, with objective measurements of improvement
- Develop and publish a school brochure
- Recruit students

Given early eligibility determination, the Greater Lawrence YWCA foresees no complications in its preparation for a September 1995 opening.

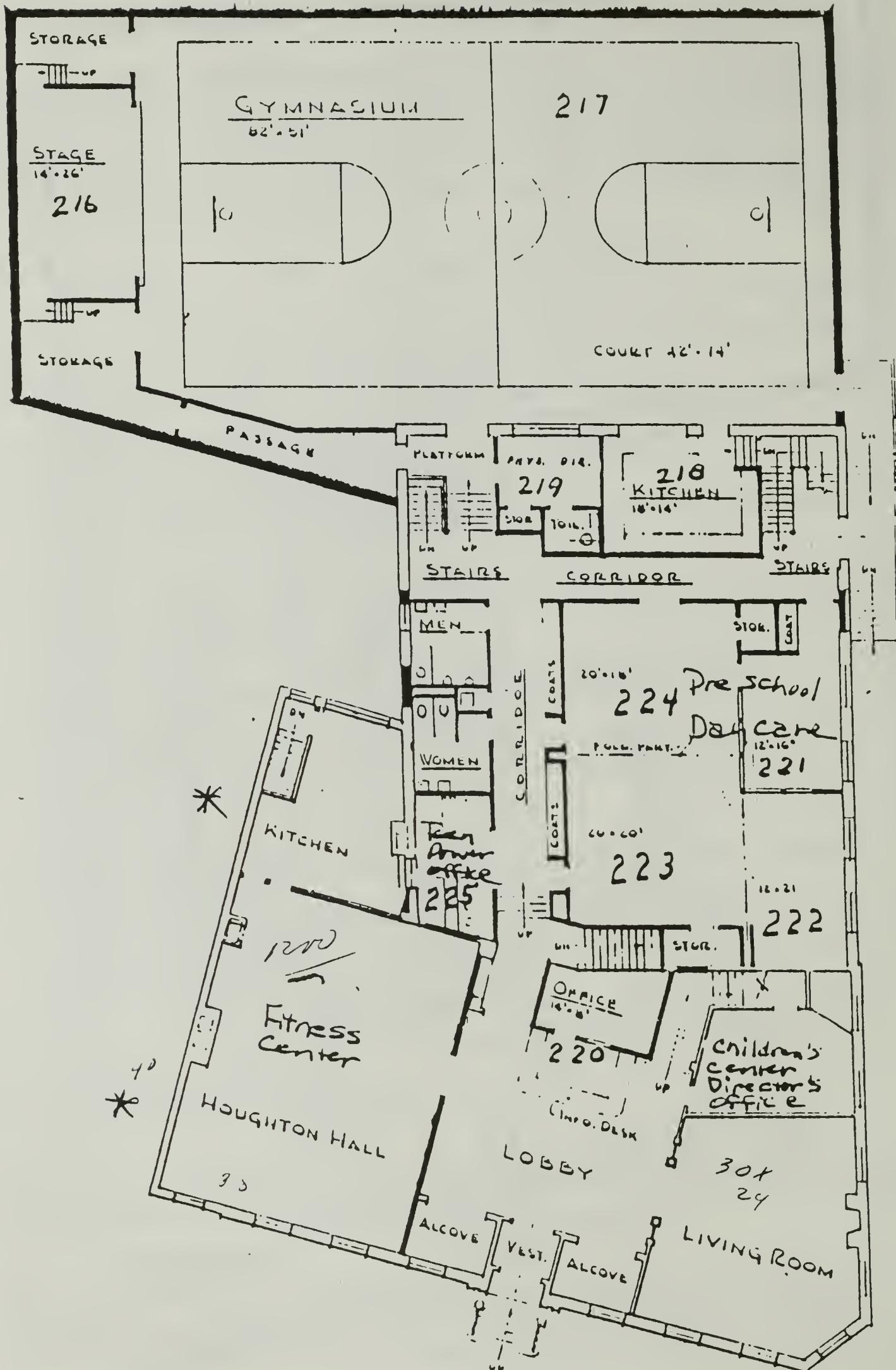
### **B.**

Does not apply. The Greater Lawrence YWCA Charter Middle School for At-Risk Adolescents is applying only for early eligibility determination for 1994, and anticipates submission of a completed application package in 1995.



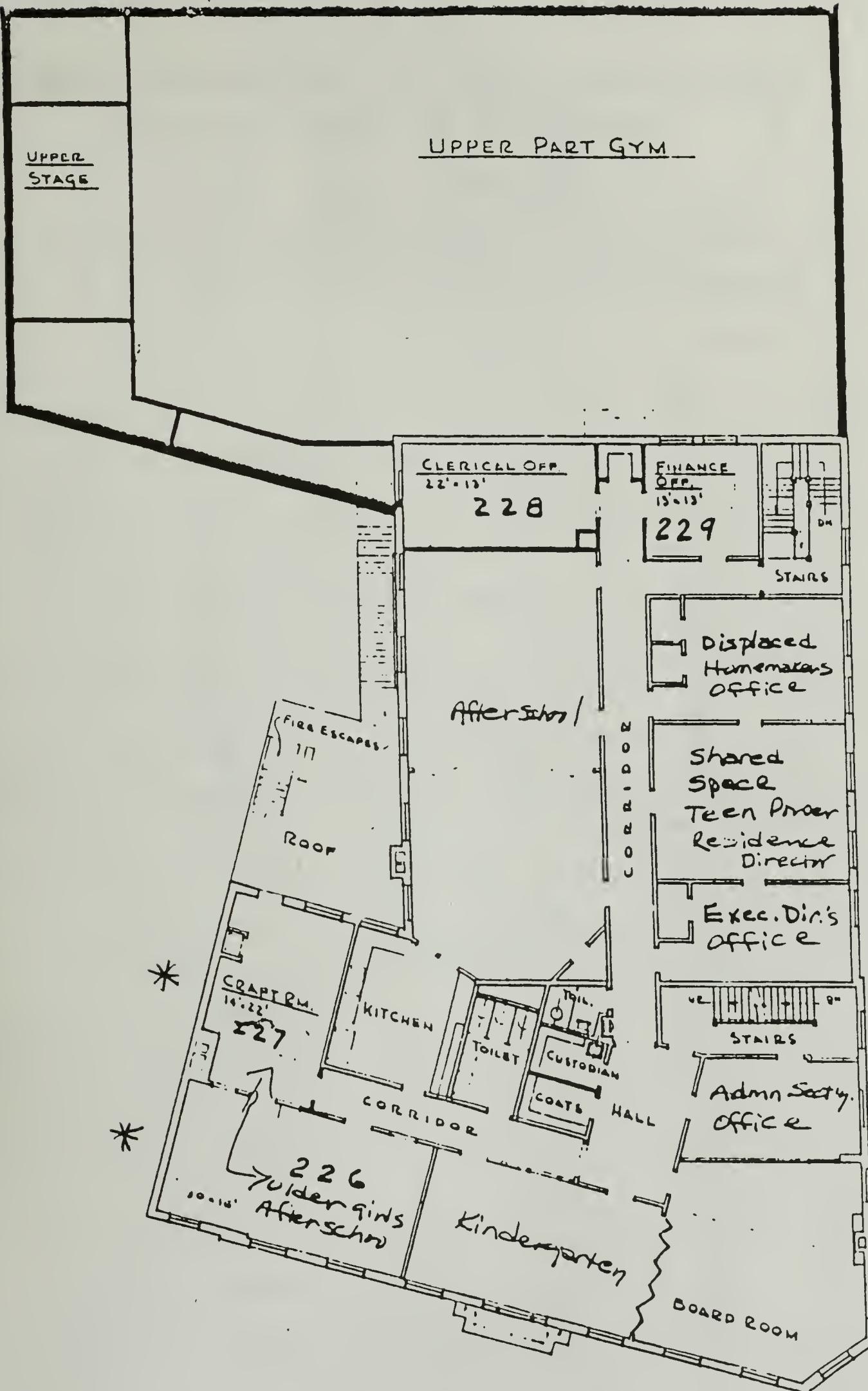
BASEMENT PLAN

Bob Jimmy  
Capt. Samm



\* rooms available

FIRST FLOOR PLAN

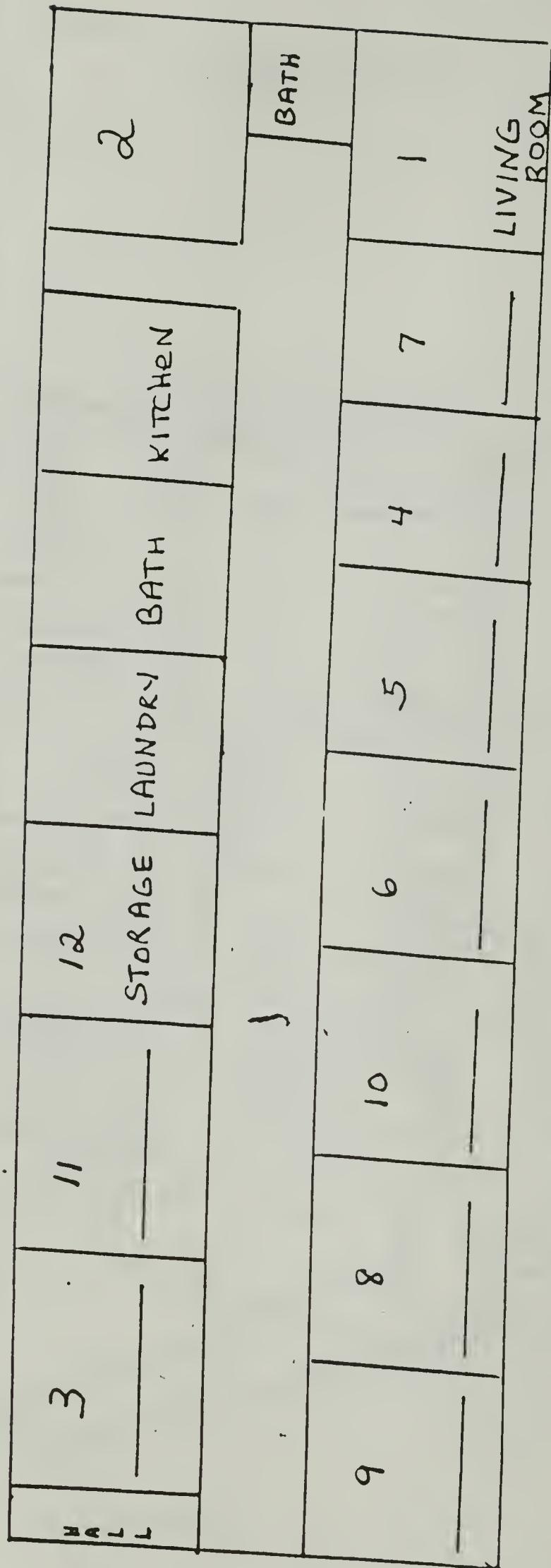


\* rooms available

SECOND FLOOR PLAN

GREATER LAWRENCE YMCA

RESIDENCE



WEEK OF: \_\_\_\_\_

6/89

# Commonwealth of Massachusetts

## Executive Office of Education

## *Charter School Application*

I/We, the undersigned charter school applicant(s), do hereby certify that the information provided herein and filed with the Executive Office of Education on this the 15th day of February 1994 (month) of the year 1994, is to the best of my/our knowledge, truthful and accurate.

(This signature sheet must be attached to the application when it is filed.)

Name:	Signature:	Date:	
Address:	City:	State: Zip: Tel:	
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Name: Mary Jane Powell		Signature: <u>Mary Jane Powell</u>	Date: 5-14-91
President, Board of Directors		President	Zip: 01840
Address: 38 Lawrence Street		City: Lawrence	Tel: (508) 687-0

If more space is required, please attach additional sheets.

Executive Office of Education, One Ashburton Place, Room 1401, Boston, MA, 02108

